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CM Afridi slams 'NFC snub' to tribal districts

• Says KP being treated with bias; claims tribal district not financially integrated into provincial share • Rallies Sindh supporters for Imran, says 'every chowk is D-Chowk' • Notes Jinnah Bagh gates locked again

By Mohammad Hussain Khan

HYDERABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi said on Saturday that merged tribal districts are being denied their constitutional share of the federal budget, claiming that the central government that has "stolen" his party's mandate is also violating the Constitution.

Speaking at a "Meet the Press" programme at the Hyderabad Press Club, CM Afridi criticised the current distribution of the National Finance Commission (NFC) award.

He claimed the NFC, meant for four provinces, is really spread across "3.5 or 3.75 provinces" because the former merged districts are not financially integrated into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's share.

PTI shifts venue after Sindh govt gives it go-ahead for public meeting: Page 13

CM Afridi highlighted the denial of NFC shares to merged districts, stressing that KP supplies cheap electricity and oil, and claims a liability of Rs4,758 [billion] against the federal in these heads.

He disclosed that while the province's share in the NFC exceeds Rs1,300bn, promised funds for the merged districts remain unpaid. The chief minister claimed that Rs100bn was promised initially, a figure that now stands at Rs300bn based on 3pc of the divisible pool.

CM Afridi noted that only Rs132bn was released while liabilities stood at Rs568bn. He regretted that the federal government had promised funds for TDPs but didn't disburse them, compelling the KP government to use Rs7.5bn from its own kitty.

KP chief claimed the federal government was biased against his administration, noting his passport was on a stop list while other provincial chief's use of Air Force jets. He also dismissed claims of a "political-terror nexus" in the province, citing a 15-point agenda by local political and religious parties that argues against military operations as a solution. He alleged that decisions were made behind "closed rooms".

"When we learnt about it, we held jirgas from Chitral to Waziristan and told entire Pakistan that they are being resettled," he said. "Our claim is proved correct today that our fears were correct... and now things have gone beyond their control."

CM Afridi termed the federal administration a "fake government" and called on parliamentarians who benefited from the alleged "robbery" of PTI's mandate to resign.

Rallies support for Imran

Separately, at a reception hosted by Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan vice president in Sindh Syed Zain Shah, KP CM Afridi aimed to rally support for jailed leader Imran Khan's upcoming protest movement.

Addressing the crowd, he announced that a new call for street agitation would soon come from the PTI founder. "Every chowk is D-chowk," CM Afridi said. "You should make preparations for it."

CM Afridi expressed hope that the people of Sindh would respond to Khan's call. He noted that while authorities had obstructed access to protest sites in the capital of Sindh, the party remained undeterred.

He noted the gates of Jinnah Bagh are locked again but affirmed PTI workers will still gather there. He also declared that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) under Asif Ali Zardari has abandoned the political legacy of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, accusing the president of "occupying" Sindh.

"Asif Zardari has occupied Sindh," CM Afridi said. "Asif Zardari's politics has put an end to politics of Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto."

Regarding the PPP's governance in Karachi, he said that the local population sees through the current administration.

"People of Sindh have seen their real faces, and people need change here and not their faces," CM Afridi said. He added the people of the province want "azadi".

HYDERABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi addresses supporters at the residence of Sindh United Party central leader Syed Zain Shah.—PPI

PMA seeks PM's intervention on FBR raids at clinics

Association claims such measures threaten fabric of healthcare delivery

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) has taken exception to the raids by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) at private healthcare centres, asking the prime minister to take notice of 'aggressive', 'commando-style' searches by tax officials.

In a statement, the representative body of healthcare professionals said the "unannounced and aggressive entry of FBR teams into private healthcare facilities — particularly across Punjab — has reached an intolerable level of harassment".

Such measures threaten the very fabric of healthcare delivery in the country, said PMA Secretary General Dr Abdul Ghafoor Shoro in a statement. "The PMA highlights that recent raids, which forced the immediate suspension of Outpatient Department (OPD) services, are not merely administrative issues; they constitute a direct interference in patient management and a violation of the sanctity of life-saving institutions," according to the statement.

It said the presence of enforcement officials in clinics "creates an atmosphere of fear, causes psychological distress to patients, and disrupts surgical teams".

"Tax collection must never come at the cost of human life. Doctors are not 'traders,' and hospitals are not 'retail outlets.' The private sector serves over 70pc of Pakistan's population. Treating healthcare providers as commercial vendors is a gross misinterpretation of a noble profession," he stated.

"While we respect the rule of law, audits should be conducted through documented, professional channels not through 'commando-style' raids that victimise healers. This targeted victimisation discourages professional excellence and pushes our brightest medical minds to seek opportunities abroad," it claimed.

The PMA said the doctors were ready to comply with taxation, provided there was accountability for how that money would be spent. "We demand that the tax collected from the sweat and toil of healers not be squandered on the luxurious lifestyles of the ruling elite," he stated.

It called upon the PM and the finance minister to take immediate notice. "We demand an immediate cessation of these aggressive tactics," Dr Shoro stated.

He warned that if the FBR does not immediately halt the 'harassment', the PMA will be forced to take the final, definitive step of a nationwide suspension of services. "The responsibility for any resulting healthcare crisis will rest solely on the shoulders of the FBR and the relevant authorities," he added.

In December 2025, the FBR deployed Inland Revenue Service (IRS) officers to the premises of commercial hospitals and clinics, marking a shift toward on-site monitoring. The initiative gained mom¬entum in the wake of the poor tax compliance of doctors in the tax year 2025.

Official figures compiled by the FBR show that a large share of Pakistan's medical profession remains outside the tax net, while a minimal number of those on the tax rolls declared extremely low annual incomes in their tax returns.

Of the 319,572 registered doctors nationwide, only 130,243 are registered on the income tax rolls, representing 40.75 per cent of the total. Even within this already narrow base, just 56,267 doctors filed income tax returns.

SC penalises four registry officers on different charges

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has imposed major disciplinary penalties on three officers of its Karachi registry for serious lapses in administrative response, and on one officer of its Lahore registry over transparency issues.

According to a statement issued on Saturday, the apex court reiterated that institutional integrity, discipline, and strict adherence to prescribed procedures were non-negotiable, particularly in matters relating to official conduct and the administration of justice.

In disciplinary proceedings concluded under the Supreme Court Establishment Service Rules, 2015, Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi imposed major penalties on three officers of the SC's Karachi registry.

The penalties were imposed for serious lapses in administrative response, including delayed reporting, failure to seek timely written directions, and delays in reconstructing judicial records from available digital copies, resulting in institutional concern.

Disciplinary proceedings were also concluded against an officer of the SC Lahore registry, following a complaint reported through the anti-corruption hotline.

A major penalty was imposed on account of transparency-related issues.

"The Supreme Court underscores that while welfare and career progression of the members of staff is a priority, nevertheless transparency and compliance with established procedures are indispensable to the credibility of judicial institutions," the statement read.

Iraq expresses keen interest in JF-17 during ACM Sidhu visit

Iraqi air chief praises PAF's professionalism, technological advancement

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: In a meeting with Pakistan's air chief, the commander of the Iraqi Air Force expressed a "keen interest" in JF-17 Thunder fighter jets and praised the Pakistan Air Force's (PAF) professionalism, the military's media wing said on Saturday.

According to a statement issued by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), PAF Air Chief Marshal (ACM) Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, who is on a visit to Iraq, called on Iraqi Air Force Commander Lt Gen Staff Pilot Mohanad Ghalib Mohammed Radi Al-Asadi.

The two met at the Iraqi Air Force headquarters, where ACM Sidhu received a guard of honour upon his arrival, it said.

"Discussions focused on enhancing bilateral military cooperation, with emphasis on joint training, capacity building and improving operational cooperation," ISPR said.

During the meeting, ACM Sidhu "highlighted the deep-rooted religious, cultural, and historical ties between Pakistan and Iraq".

He also "reaffirmed PAF's commitment to support the Iraqi Air Force in training and capacity development".

The statement said the pair "agreed to pursue joint exercises and training initiatives to strengthen interoperability".

Meanwhile, the Iraqi air chief commended PAF's "professionalism and technological advancement".

The statement added that he also expressed "interest in benefiting from PAF's world-class training and expressed a keen interest in JF-17 Thunder fighter jets, Super Mushshak trainer aircraft".

The commander also appreciated Pakistan for its role in regional stability, it said.

"The visit underscored the shared resolve of both air forces to further strengthen defence ties and professional collaboration," ISPR added.

The JF-17 Thunder aircraft are jointly developed by Pakistan and China. Earlier this week, Bangladesh had expressed an interest in the "potential procurement" of JF-17 Thunder aircraft.

In the meantime, reports have emerged stating that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are in talks to convert about $2 billion of Saudi loans into a JF-17 fighter jet deal, deepening military cooperation months after the two nations signed a mutual defence pact last year.

IAEA project advances tools to measure patients' radiation exposure

New biodosimetry data may support safer use of medical radiation

By Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: A research project carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has strengthened global understanding of how exposure to ionising radiation affects human health.

According to the IAEA's latest bulletin, the work focused on clinical applications of biodosimetry — the use of biological responses to estimate the amount of ionising radiation a patient receives. Over several years, it generated new data expanding the potential of dosimetric biomarkers, biological indicators that reflect radiation exposure.

"Within everyday clinical practice, the move towards personalised medicine requires assays to accurately assess radiation exposure at the individual level," said Oleg Belyakov, an IAEA radiobiologist and the project's technical officer. "Beyond ensuring patient safety, these specialised tests are critical for predicting how normal tissues respond to clinical procedures involving ionising radiation."

He added, "While previously validated biological indicators offer a promising foundation, there are a number of knowledge gaps and methodological limitations which need to be addressed before these markers can serve as a reliable tool to inform routine clinical decision-making."

To address this challenge, the IAEA launched a coordinated research project (MEDBIODOSE) in 2017 to examine the role of biodosimetric markers and methods within radiation oncology, nuclear medicine and diagnostic and interventional radiology.

Thirty-one institutions joined the project, and each team collected and analysed patients' biodosimetric data — biological measurements and observations used to estimate a person's radiation exposure. This included cytogenetic data (chromosomal aberrations) and molecular data (protein markers associated with damaged DNA and any changes in gene expression).

With over 100 publications resulting from their analyses, researchers identified several new biomarkers that signalled a biological response to radiation. These indicators were validated in terms of their relevance and reliability and used to generate calibration curves for estimating the absorbed dose.

By using cells from multiple donors, the project's participants could examine variations in radiation response — enabling the identification of radiosensitive individuals who may require specific radiation procedures and protection measures.

Laboratory experiments simulating uneven or partial radiation exposure at high doses provided important baseline data to improve existing methods for checking radiation exposure in clinical environments. The study's scientists also developed new devices for the rapid — and in some cases automated — analysis of radiation biomarkers.

Among other outcomes, researchers demonstrated that standard biodosimetric methods are capable of detecting any chromosomal breaks in a patient's lymphocytes — a type of specialised white blood cell — after a single computed tomography (CT) scan.

Since low-dose CT scans for screening lung cancer do not appear to damage human DNA, this finding can help address concerns around increased risks of radiation-induced cancer.

ONE of the relics of Lord Buddha.—Photo by the writer

Rare Buddha relics add to Taxila Museum's appeal

The artefacts had been kept hidden to prevent theft, but are being showcased under strict security

By Amjad Iqbal

TAXILA: The Taxila Museum has one of the most sacred relics of Buddhism, the relics of Lord Buddha, on display, making it the only museum in Pakistan to hold such a rare object connected to the Gandhara age.

After the authorities showcased them in 2022, hundreds of followers of Buddhism, especially monks and religious scholars, have visited the museum to witness the bone relics and offer religious rituals before them.

These were the same objects twice sent to Sri Lanka for public exhibition in the past. During the first tour, then Sri Lankan president Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, along with members of the Buddhist clergy and other dignitaries, inaugurated the exposition in Colombo.

Punjab Department of Archaeology Director Mohammad Iqbal Manj is credited with the plan to display these items. Since the inauguration of the Taxila Museum in 1928, the holy Buddhist relics had been kept in secret chambers to prevent their theft, he told *Dawn*.

For their display, the Thai government recently gifted a gold-plated, bulletproof showcase equipped with multilayer security protocols and then-Thailand envoy Chakkrid Krachaiwon formally inaugurated the showcase.

Senior Thai monk Most Venerable Arayawangso, along with his disciples, also visited Pakistan and the museum for these relics.

Speaking about their importance, Mr Manj said only a few "original" Buddha relics exist in the world. He said the department was cautious about their safety and security, especially in view of the mysterious theft of 81 rare antiquities in 1999.

Dr Abdul Ghafour Lone, a senior official of the Federal Department of Archaeology, Islamabad, who also conducted successful excavations, particularly at the Buddhist site of Jinan Wali Dehri, told *Dawn* that these relics were discovered by Sir John Marshall during the excavation of the Dharmarajika Stupa in Taxila between 1912 and 1916.

The relics were found in a small golden casket wrapped with inscriptions in the ancient Kharosthi script of Gandhara. It was inscribed on the silver wrapping foils around the Buddha relics that Urusaka of Noacha placed the bone relics of Lord Buddha in his chapel at Dharmarajika.

He said that the stupa is considered one of the eight largest Buddhist stupas in South Asia, built by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BC.

"The stupa, along with the large monastic complex that later developed around it, forms part of the Ruins of Taxila, which were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980," Mr Lone added.

Abdul Nasir Khan, former curator of the Taxila Museum, said that these bone relics hold immense importance for followers of Buddhism. He said that Buddhists thronged the venues where these relics were exhibited in Sri Lankan cities of Gampaha, Kurunegala, Kalutara, Hambantota, Monaragala, Ampara, Badulla, Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura.

Curator of the Taxila Museum, Humera Naz, told *Dawn* that this valuable record was dated to the year 136 (78 AD). She said the inscription confirmed that the relics belong to the Buddha.

"This inscription records that on the 15th day of Ashadha, in the 136th year of Azes, the sacred relics of Buddha were enshrined by the venerable Sion, a Bactrian inhabitant of Noacha."

She said that the display of these holy relics has not only boosted religious tourism but has also helped promote the country's soft image. She added that since their display, the museum has witnessed visits by Most Venerable Arayawangso, who offered the religious rituals of Kathina — a Buddhist festival — for the first time in Pakistan's history.

This was followed by visits from chief monks and monks from South Korea, Sri Lanka and other Buddhist countries, as well as scholars from across the globe.